

On the Rise With Your Elevator Speech: Push All The Right Buttons!

In the time it takes to ride an elevator with a stranger — sixteen seconds — you can begin to form a new business relationship that lasts a lifetime. It's done with your Elevator speech. Best yet, you don't have to be in an elevator to share yours. At conferences and conventions, in hallways and hotels, at cafes and while standing in line — anywhere you have sixteen seconds!

An elevator speech is a conversational device that succinctly tells people who you are, what you do, and, more importantly, what you can do for others. It's an introductory paragraph that is given conversationally, when meeting a stranger. It is an expression of you, and at its best, showcases the benefits of doing business with you. It's the perfect response to the proverbial question: "What do you do?"

I turn aspirations into achievements. Hi, I'm Craig Harrison. (Pause, smile.) I'm a motivational speaker, trainer and consultant who helps express their sales and service excellence to sell and service better. (pause, smile.) Through keynotes, training, and coaching I help others express their excellence. Tell me, what's your expertise? How are you expressing your excellence? (smile, listen wholeheartedly.)

My speech is just a few sentences long and changes slightly each time I give it. It's been scripted, rehearsed and honed over months of delivery, yet I deliver it seemingly off-the-cuff. I smile when I deliver mine. Notice how I mention several benefits, delivery mechanisms, and also end with several questions to draw in my listener.

Elements of the Elevator speech

Your elevator speech should consist of your name and title, company, and something special about yourself: your talents, experience, or approach. Remember, the goal is to stand out from the crowd so be memorable. There is no formulaic rule you need to follow about the order of your elevator speech's elements. What sounds right, natural and logical to your listener? That's the key.

What You Say And How You Say it

Pronounce your name clearly. It helps to be upbeat. Smile. Perhaps you'll press a card into their palm, or give strangers a mnemonic or other easy way to remember you. Often you can end an exchange with the phrase "let's exchange cards." It implies a partnership of equals and isn't just about you...a turn-off with some elevator speech-givers.

What Makes You Special?

The world is already full of salespeople, marketers and entrepreneurs. Put a special spin on your talents or occupation. Don't waste time telling us your field or job title. Paint a picture. Put us in it! One of many management consultants I know starts her elevator speech by telling "I keep your company out of Dilbert's comic strip..." That captured your attention, and shows us she is excited about her craft, and that she also has a sense of humor.

Give it a Twist

Represent your occupation in its most ennobling light. Plumber jokingly reminds listeners that "a flush always beats a full house. An IRS agent refers to himself as a "government fundraiser." A midwife "brings life into this world." A credit specialist "gives credit where credit is due." These phrases invite further inquiry.

Credentials Build Credibility

Share your qualifications such as special skills, degrees, or experience. Are you an award winning graphic designer, the Chamber of Commerce's entrepreneur of the year, or recently profiled in Who's Who of Georgia? Accentuate these distinctions. Yet remember, it's less about you and what you can do. It's more about the results, outcomes or benefits to the listener of doing business with you. Focus on end results and outcomes of the processes you employ.

Strangers subscribe to WII-FM

Others naturally want to know "What's in it for me?" Your speech should phrase your skills in terms of benefits to their company. Here are examples for technical and non-technical job seekers:

"Hi, I teach people how to behave in front of food. I'm Nancy Black, a nutritionist who helps clients eat less and enjoy it more. I consult to restaurants on menu selections, write a weekly column in The Daily Planet, and work with private clients to stay slim and trim and healthy. Tell me, what's your biggest nutritional challenge?"

Ask a Question

It's not just about you. Qualify your listener. Ask closed- and open-ended questions of them to elicit more information: "Who currently supplies your hardware?" or "Does your group hire contractors?" are closed-ended questions to quickly identify if a fit exists. "Tell me about past small businesses you've worked with?" and "What is the typical cycle for your buying needs?" are open-ended questions that help you gather more information. Now listen and respond accordingly.

Special Delivery

Remember, it's not just what you say but how you say it. Speak conversationally. Your goal is not to give a speech, but to engender conversation. Induce dialog through smiling, giving good eye contact, and being generally interested in your conversational partner as a professional and a person. Draw them in through being polite, polished and confident. Friendliness counts too. Have good posture, dress professionally and employ all those great skills you honed in your local Toastmasters club.

Your ride is just beginning. Craft your sixteen second sound bite. Hone it among friends, acquaintances and record it on your answering machine to hear how confident you sound. By being poised, polished and prepared for your sixteen seconds of fame you can ride your elevator speech from the streets to the suites! When you push the right buttons with your elevator speech, the doors to success will be opening any second!

About the Author

Craig Harrison's Expressions of Excellence provides sales and service solutions to corporations, associations and individuals who aspire to greatness. You can read more about Craig's [Elevator Speech presentations, Tips Booklet, and related articles for specific fields](#). For information on other solutions of Craig Harrison's through speaking, training, coaching and consulting, visit [Expressions of Excellence.com](#) e-mail Excellence@craigspeaks.com or call (888) 450-0664 toll-free in the US and Canada.

Source: <http://www.thewritemarket.com>